

“Panjshir”

Narrator: Panjshir is the birth place of Ahmad Shah Masood, Afghanistan’s national hero. It is also a province that has been impoverished and that has lost much of its infrastructure because of several wars. The residents of this green and beautiful village have suffered much during the last war. But they never lost their hope, because there is light at the end of every period of darkness.

Now has come the time of brightness in the beautiful valleys of Panjshir. The beautiful views attest that development and progress are ongoing in the province. Its people are also working to further develop their country.

The Panjshir water supply project is one of the foremost examples of development in the area. A year ago, the residents of Zamankor, Janghalaab, Peshghor and Pareeyan did not have access to clean drinking water. Through the consultation of the provincial government, which serves as a bridge between the people and the government, the necessity for the area to have clean drinking water was realized. After much effort, through the cooperation of Panjshir PRT, and with the financial support of USAID, water sanitation projects were initiated in the aforementioned areas.

Engineer Mohammad Saber Shamal, Regional Director of Tetra Tech ARD in Parwan Province: These projects were initiated at the request of the population and the Panjshir PRT team. They were approved by the Panjshir provincial council, who submitted them to USAID for approval. USAID then handed the projects to ARD for their final implementation.

Elizabeth Simcock, Director of Provincial Operation of PRT in Panjshir: The government prioritizes the requests it receives from communities based on its knowledge of the situation in the province. So we work directly with the government as it knows which communities and projects are being prioritized. This process is bringing everyone in through appropriate channels to meet the needs that have been identified.

Engineer Mohammad Saber Shamal, Regional Director of Tetra Tech ARD in Parwan Province: We now have a total of five projects under progress, as approved by ARD: Zamankoor – a water supply network; Kar-e Aabdarah – a water supply network where spring water is stored for people to use; the drilling of 4 wells in Rokha district and Ghajyand Lala Mirdad Villages; Beshghor – a water supply network in Khanj District; Jangle Aab, in Khanje District; and Korpeetab, in Paryan District. We have civil engineers and supervisors in the field. We also have one

engineer in every province. Engineer Qaseem has been appointed for the province of Panjshir, where he is implementing the projects.

Narrator: This young engineer is responsible for all water supply projects in Panjshir Province. Thanks to his hard work and keen interest in providing clean water, he has done a tremendous service for his people. Qaseem's skill set has enabled him to successfully design and implement the water supply network in the difficult terrain of mountains and valleys of Panjshir.

Mohammad Qaseem, Engineer of Water Irrigation Project in Panjshir: The provincial council received the proposal for clean water from the people. The request was taken up by the Panjshir in the PDS conference. After the preliminary checking and surveying was conducted by the PRT, the proposal was submitted to USAID. USAID reviewed, and then forwarded it to the ARD offices.

As you can see, we are located in the Jangul Aab district of Khanj. We are now going to the natural spring and water storage facility that is located approximately 1500 meters from here. Our network is designed so that gravity causes the water to easily flow from the spring to the storage facility.

Here is the water storage facility which was constructed by ARDSWISS. The network has a length of around 2280 meters and a storage capacity of 40 m³. The entire network is providing access to clean drinking water to around 180 families.

The large pipe then splits into a smaller pipe network through which we distribute water to other regions. One main pipe is located in Goldarah village. It is divided into nine smaller pipes.

When I was handed over the responsibility of these projects in Panjshir, I realized that the people were facing huge problems due to unclean water. One day, I saw women and children using water from a flooded river. Otherwise, they had to climb very high in the mountains to get clean water. The villagers have faced a lot of problems because of the lack of clean drinking water.

Seeing the problems people were facing gave me the motivation and drive to make sure that the project was carried to a successful completion. As you can see, with this pipe, I will start to provide clean water to 10 families.

One of the residents: Before this project was implemented, the water we were getting in the area was not very healthy. Because of this, there were many diseases in the village. Since the completion of the project, we have seen a decline in the number and frequency of diseases thanks to the healthy and clean water. This is

very positive for the residents, and they are very happy now. We suggest that the government initiate more projects like this and put an end to the many problems caused by unsafe drinking water.

One of the residents: Before this project, we did not have access to healthy water. We used to get water from the river. This water was not very clean. The water we are getting now prevents the people from getting many different diseases. Inhabitants are very happy.

Mohammad Qaseem, Engineer of Water Irrigation Project in Panjshir: It is normal to encounter difficulties in the early stages of any project. My career in engineering and my previous experience has helped me deal with the problems that came up during the course of the project.

As far as the Zaman Kor project is concerned, water is coming from the natural spring Coir, which is located at a distance of 1 600 meters. The water comes through a pipe to a storage tank which has a capacity of 40 m³. The water storage tank is closed at night. People can only access it during the day.

Habib-U-Rahman, Technician in Water Irrigation Project: I am in charge of the technical component of this project. I use the tools provided to me to tackle the daily problems.

Narrator: Water is life, without water, life is not possible. The Panjshir water supply project is a vital project for the people of the valley. Such projects can solve the immediate problems of the people in need for safe drinking water. Now, they are extremely happy because they no longer have to worry about getting clean water.

One of the residents: We used to drink water from the river. Ever since these pipes have been bringing clean water to us, we are very happy. This is a good thing.

Mohammad Qaseem, Engineer of Water Irrigation Project in Panjshir: One day, as the project was being implemented, a woman came to me and said: "My sons always have a sore throat and are always sick". I immediately realized that this was caused by the unsafe drinking water. So I told her: "Boil the water before drinking it until the project is completed. We will try to complete the project as soon as possible. Afterwards, you will have access to clean drinking water". Having safe drinking water has solved many problems in our communities, including limiting the number and frequency of diseases.

One of the residents: Before, we did not have access to clean water. We are thankful that we now have safe drinking water and that all our previous problems were solved.

One of the local doctors: People in our village used to be sick often before this project was implemented. Now we are blessed that it was completed. Thanks to it, more than 500 families are now safe from sickness and the other problems they used to face.

Mohammad Qaseem, Engineer of Water Irrigation Project in Panjshir: A total of 85 to 90 pipes have been installed in the province of Panjshir. Another project consisting of 58 pipes and 3 storage tanks has also been initiated in the SafeedShir district of Khanj. Two tanks have a storage capacity of 40 m³, and the third one has a capacity of 30 m³. We hope to complete this project within 3 months.

GhulamHussain “Ghiasi”, district governor of Onaba district in Panjshir: These projects have been successfully implemented through ARD and with the financial support of USAID. They are very helpful to our province.

Mohammad Qaseem, Engineer of Water Irrigation Project in Pansjhir: I am really happy that I can implement such projects for the needy people of this province. I am happy that I can serve my community through these projects.

Head of Provincial Council of JangalAab village: We are happy as well. We support Engineer Qaseem's efforts and hard work for the successful implementation of these projects.